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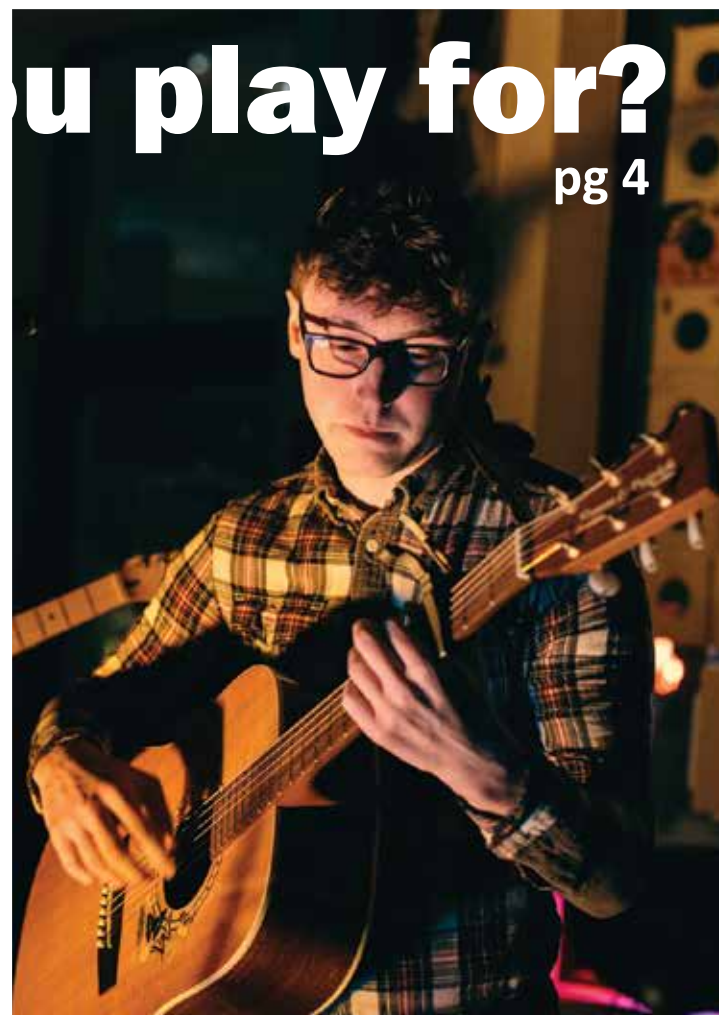
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## What do you play for?

pg 4



**6** Vet honored  
for helping her  
comrades.

**7** Saving lives  
with blankets.

**16** Meet vendor  
and poet Daniel  
Johnson.

#### COVER ART

Indie Bands with a Mission partnered with Oust (Ben Mericli, Laurel Halsey, Michael Erisman) and other local bands to raise money for Sasha Bruce Youthwork.

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*Street Sense began in August 2003 after Laura Thompson Osuri and Ted Henson approached the National Coalition for the Homeless on separate occasions with the idea to start a street paper in Washington, D.C.*

*Through the work of dedicated volunteers, Street Sense published its first issue in November 2003. In 2005, Street Sense achieved 501 (c) 3 status as a nonprofit organization, formed a board of directors and hired a full-time executive director.*

*Today, Street Sense is published every two weeks through the efforts of four salaried employees, more than 100 active vendors, and dozens of volunteers. Nearly 30,000 copies are in circulation each month.*

## How It Works

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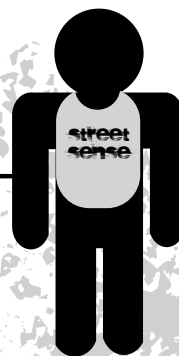
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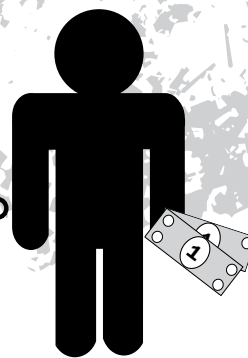
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# Rec Centers: Shelters of Last Resort?

By Mary Otto  
Editor-in-Chief

Melvorn Reid lost her apartment after the building was sold. For awhile now, she and her 10-year-old grandson have moved from place to place, doubling up with various friends and relatives.

About three weeks ago, after a friend asked them to move on, Reid and the boy found themselves with no other option than to spend a night in a coin laundry.

"You sit in a chair and fake like you are washing clothes," explained Reid, 59.

In the morning, after she walked her grandson to school, she went to the Virginia Williams Family Resource Center. She asked for shelter.

The city is legally required to shelter the homeless from winter cold. But this winter, a flood of homeless families has overwhelmed the city's shelter system. The 285 rooms at the city's family shelter, the former D.C. General Hospital, have remained full. Hundreds more families have exhausted the supply of motel rooms the city rents when the shelter overflows.

By the time Reid qualified for help, the city had begun housing families at city recreation centers. The step was controversial, but city officials said they had little choice.

At about 10 o'clock on that bitterly cold night, the hypothermia hotline bus delivered Reid and her grandson to one of

the recreation centers. Inside, Reid recalled, they found other families already gathered behind loosely assembled partitions, with babies crying, toddlers wandering, parents talking and lights shining down from the ceiling.

"They had to make a space for us," she recalls. "We were in front of the bleachers."

They bedded down on cots with makeshift dividers on two sides.

"There was no privacy whatever," said Reid, a small woman with a coronet of fine braids.

The night was hard for her, but harder for her grandson. "He was scared."

The next few nights, also spent in rec centers, were scarcely better, she recalled. Her grandson was afraid to let her out of his sight, afraid to wash up at the men's room sink, tired and distracted from lack of sleep.

District officials said the partitioned areas constituted the "private rooms" the city is required to provide to homeless families under the city's Homeless Services Reform Act.

Legal advocates sued, claiming that homeless families were entitled by law to more privacy.

Reid and three other families were named as plaintiffs in a class action suit.

On March 7, District of Columbia Superior

Court Senior Judge Robert S. Tignor agreed with the advocates. He found that the recreation center placements denied the families "adequate privacy and physical security" and placed family members, particularly children, at increased risk of communicable disease, emotional trauma and stress.

***"They had to make a space for us. We were in front of the bleachers."***

-Melvern Reid

He ordered that any of the named families remaining in the rec centers be moved into private rooms, in accordance with city law. One family named in the suit had already been placed in a motel for health reasons, prior to the judge's ruling. Following the order, Reid and her grandson and two other families were placed.

"You hear about people going up against the government and never winning," said Reid. "I'm kind of surprised we did."

That single night in the motel was a relief, said Reid. Then the cold spell ended and with it, the city's offer of hypothermia shelter.

Reid and her grandson are doubled up again, this time with her sister who is 75 and suffers from emphysema.

"I can't stay with her much longer," noted Reid, a former child care provider who spends her days at a work readiness program, developing her computer skills and hoping for an office job.

For their part, city officials are interpreting the rec center ruling as applying only to the four named plaintiffs. They note that with the approach of the tourist season and the annual cherry blossom festival, available motel rooms will be in even shorter supply. In a statement issued after the ruling, David Berns, Director of the city's Department of Human Services, warned that the District can guarantee no additional motel placements.

"The city will continue to provide for the safety of children and families during hypothermia alerts using the resources available. Although space at hotels for three families for a night was possible to arrange, the supply of hotel rooms in the District available for other homeless families has been exhausted," said Berns. "The continued use of the emergency shelters during hypothermia alerts remains the only available option for those not covered in the judge's order."

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David Lesser, Mike Janssen (above), Steve Kane and Mark Kennedy (right) make up The Boundary Stones.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NICHOLAS KARLIN



Pales, mugs, and other improvised donation repositories collected over \$200 for Sasha Bruce Youthwork. PHOTO COURTESY OF CLARISSA VILLONDO



# PICKIN' ~~ON~~ FOR Sasha Bruce Youthwork

By Eric Falquero  
Art Director

Indie Bands With a Mission started with a healthy dose of youthful idealism - and a cookbook.

Clarissa Villondo and Maria Deloso first took on the challenge of feeding the hungry back in 2009 when they were still in high school.

As avid concert-goers and bakers, the two friends devised a unique community service project.

They collected local bands' favorite recipes and gathered them into handmade cookbooks, artfully crafted with scrapbook paper, embroidery floss and glue.

The books sold for \$10 each. All proceeds were donated to local food banks.

Then, in 2010, Villondo and Deloso de-



PHOTO BY MARIA DELOSO

cided to hold a concert to draw more attention to their project.

"We realized we enjoyed doing shows more than making cookbooks," Villondo said.

They have been organizing donation-only shows to benefit nonprofits that address hunger and homelessness in the District ever since.

A recent concert to benefit an after-school program for homeless teens was their ninth and latest effort.

On the night of March 1, fans packed an Arlington record shop, the CD Cellar, to hear three local folk bands: the Boundary Stones, Will Wrigley, and Oust. There was a lot of energy in the grassroots atmosphere.

"We realized we really do like the more DIY (do it yourself) venues. DIY and DIT (do it together)," Villondo explained.

A repurposed streetlamp lit the performers at the front of the crowded shop. A banjo, accordion, harmonica, trumpet, xylophone and mandolin all lent their tones.

Between donated CD sales profits from Oust and the plastic jack-o-lantern and ceramic mugs set out to collect contributions, \$210.00 was raised to fund a tutoring program run by Sasha Bruce Youthwork, a D.C.-based nonprofit that helps homeless

and runaway young people.

George Burton, an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer who serves as volunteer coordinator at Sasha Bruce approached Indie Bands with a Mission about having a benefit show. A local musician himself, Burton encountered Villondo at a concert and was impressed with Indie Bands with a Mission and eager to collaborate. The March 1 show was the second show the organization has staged for Sasha Bruce. "I've been involved with the D.C. music scene for over four years now," Burton said. "I'm proud to bring that to the table and connect that network to a great cause like Sasha Bruce Youthwork."

Burton connected Villondo with some of the musicians who performed on March 1. Villondo said the network of bands willing to help out is growing. Musicians who have good experiences playing benefit shows introduce fellow performers to Indie Bands With a Mission. Villondo, who is now in college, and four fellow students are working at capacity to book as many shows as possible. Deloso's family has moved out of the area but she pitches in when she can.

"We'll eventually move to booking everyone we're now friends with," said Villondo. The donations raised by the March 1 con-

cert will help a tutoring project that Burton has taken an active role in nurturing.

"The tutoring program is something developed by volunteers themselves rather than Sasha Bruce," Burton said. "The AmeriCorps VISTA before me just made that connection and made it happen."

Sasha Bruce Youthwork, originally the Washington Streetwork Project, has been operating in the D.C. area for the past 40 years to improve the lives of vulnerable youth: homeless, abused, neglected, runaway, or at-risk. The Streetwork Project originally counseled youth living outside in attempt to reconnect them with home; today Sasha Bruce has expanded its mission to run 18 programs across the city dedicated to shelter, counseling, education, and career development. The group says it helps 1,500 youth and 5,000 family members each year.

The tutoring program has also evolved. It started out as a drop-in mentoring and homework help lab at Sasha Bruce's administrative building, but Burton saw that many of the youth faced difficulties taking advantage of it. Their lives were by nature transient and their needs varied widely. He is trying to address those barriers by sending the tutors to the youths. He is currently testing the new model at two programs: a



Andrew Kullberg and Will Wrigley. PHOTO COURTESY OF CLARISSA VILLONDO

home for boys who are involved with the court system and a home for young mothers, both operated by Sasha Bruce.

"The youth live there, so we'll always have a perceptive audience from each living situation," Burton said.

The tutoring program stresses educa-

tional and professional development and is geared to serve youth aged 12 through 24. While the home for boys' community tutoring goal is career development, the young mothers community is focusing specifically on test preparation. Many residents are working towards their GED,

SATs, or entrance into vocational programs. Burton said he believes these overarching goals are important to keep youth focused on their success.

If the new model performs well at the two test sites, Burton hopes to expand it to Sasha Bruce's other sites.

The tutoring program is supported by a network of 10 to 15 long term volunteers who have gone through an extensive screening process. Two to three volunteers travel to each tutoring site every night.

Money from the Indie Bands with a Mission benefit show will help pay for transportation, school supplies and snacks.

"Almost all of our programs could benefit from tutoring," Burton said. "Fundraising was a good step forward, but I need to schedule another interest meeting to recruit more volunteers."

Villondo said she is eager to work with Sasha Bruce Youthwork again.

"If we can prevent youth from being homeless - that's preventing more adults from being homeless," Villondo said.

Burton believes both he and Villondo draw inspiration from Positive Force DC, a self-proclaimed activist collective that has been organizing benefit shows in the District since 1985. Many members also participate in street outreach work

throughout the city.

"There is a very strong connection between the local music scene and activism," said Burton. "I think that is something specific to the DC culture."

Villondo said Positive Force helped her find one of her group's original concert venues: St Stephen and the Incarnation Episcopal Church on Newton Street NW.

Besides the social benefits, if you judge by the responses of the fans who came out March 1, the shows themselves are offering new music in interesting venues.

"I'm really into folk music and the small setting," said Buddy Stora. "The show was very cool, very relaxed."

The bands he heard were excellent, he added.

"You really get a flavor for things that are up and coming," Stora said. "You never know when one of these bands will be the next Lumineers."

For him, the March 1 show was a win-win.

"You really kill two birds with one stone: great music for a great cause," said Stora.

Indie Bands with a Mission will stage another benefit show at CD Cellar on May 31, 2014.



Sasha Bruce Volunteer Coordinator George Burton (being pointed at) with two former clients and several tutors. PHOTO COUTESY OF SASHA BRUCE YOUTHWORX

Agencies Unite for Common Cause:

# End Veteran Homelessness NOW!

By Morgan Austin  
Editorial Intern

Vicky Williams served as a nurse during the Iraq War.

But when she returned home, she became homeless.

She didn't let hardship defeat her. She fought to get back on her feet. Then she helped others. She used her experience to advocate for fellow veterans, particularly female veterans struggling to overcome homelessness and other problems.

Williams, 44, is now a peer support counselor at the District's Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

She was recently honored for her efforts to help and secure housing for needy veterans across the city by harnessing the resources of the multi-agency Veterans NOW initiative, which has set a goal of ending veteran homelessness in the District by 2015.

Matt Cary, director of the D.C. Office of D.C. Veterans Affairs, presented the award.

But it was Kevin Moone, the District of Columbia Housing Authority's representative to the Veterans NOW initiative, who summed up the passionate spirit Williams brings to her work.

"She's an advocate that if you get on her bad side, you better watch out," he said. "But she has a heart to save every veteran on the street and that's what she does."

Williams beamed as she accepted the praise. "To go from having nothing to something, there are no words to describe it," said Williams. She thanked those who have helped her mentally and physically along the way.

Williams secured permanent housing in 2011, enrolled in college in 2013 and was employed the same year by the VA Medical Center. She's working on a master's degree in social work.

Williams said her experiences with homelessness gave her insights into challenges facing a system designed to help

returning vets.

"I noticed a lot of the information that was needed to move forward was missing," Williams said. "As a female homeless vet, I noticed there were no benefits and there was a lack of funding."

Williams took it upon herself to go to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and discuss what was needed.

Since then, she has had the satisfaction of seeing many of her recommendations become reality. She has also seen many fellow veterans housed. Those efforts have been enhanced by Veterans NOW, a local initiative started in 2013 and comprised of the District of Columbia Housing Authority, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Office of D.C. Veteran Affairs, the Community Partnership, Miriam's Kitchen and other government and nonprofit organizations.



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID SEROTA

The Veterans Now event on Feb. 27 celebrated veterans and offered a forum for discussing the challenges and solutions for ending chronic homelessness.

But advocates also had much to celebrate.

From August through November 2013, members of the Veterans NOW team housed 207 veterans, nearly achieving the overall goal of housing 225 veterans during that period. Veterans NOW is entering the final month of a second 100-day campaign, with a fresh goal of housing another 190 vets. Speakers at the Veterans Now event made clear that none of the ongoing work could be done without the cooperation of many public and private partners.

D.C. Housing Authority has tapped into a network of landlords to find available units and get them inspected and ready for occupancy. The U.S. Department of

Veterans Affairs helped identify vets in need and streamline the process of signing leases. Furniture donations have come from the Home Depot Foundation. Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers have helped with the rent.

The Veterans NOW team has set its sights upon fostering even partnerships with landlords and getting more groups involved.

But challenges remain. Housing costs are high and competition for affordable units is intense, advocates said. Each month, 1,000 new residents move into D.C., making finding affordable housing for veterans difficult.

Matt Cary praised D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray's decision to set aside \$187 million for the preservation and construction of affordable housing. Beyond housing, Veterans NOW is also working to get veterans help with medical, dental and mental health care, as well as with education, job training and financial literacy.

Williams has a new perspective on all of these challenges and potential solutions now that she has a home and is part of a larger system helping homeless veterans. "Being in the VA, I see a lot more than I did before," she said. "I can relate to some of the things that were done, were being done, and ... not being done."

Williams, advocating for women's benefits, has fought the misperception that homeless veterans are always just men. She's pushed to ensure women are compensated for serving their country. The VA Medical Center has done more to provide services for women veterans such as mental health services as well as health care services.

"We want to continue to fight, strive, and do everything that we can do," Williams said.



**Veteran Vicky Williams dances with pride as she is awarded by the city Office of Veterans Affairs for her work with homeless vets.**

PHOTO BY MORGAN AUSTIN

# Outreach Workers Just Trying to Keep People Warm

By Tommy Chalk  
Editorial Intern

At 5 p.m., many people in Washington D.C. head home after a day of work. They walk in their front door, kick off their shoes and heat up a meal, or maybe they just sit on the couch and wind down a bit. Their workday is over. But for Gunther Stern, the executive director of Georgetown Ministry Center (GMC), and Dr. Ron Koshes, a psychologist, the night of work is just beginning.

On a recent, frigid March night, the two went around the Georgetown/Dupont Circle/14th Street area to check on members of the local homeless community. Stern, who is always on the lookout for those in need, carried a backpack full of emergency blankets. Their first stop was Miriam's Kitchen, an establishment that serves an evening meal to homeless people and provides rooms used for counseling. At Miriam's Kitchen, Stern and Koshes made sure that certain individuals who they normally check on were dressed warmly, and Koshes made certain that everyone was psychologically capable of staying out in the cold. They then headed over to George Washington University Hospital to see if anyone there needed help for the night. They spoke with a woman who said she was born in Canada and eagerly showed them an old photograph taken when she was 18-years-old, with her 31-year-old husband.

They went next to a branch of the D.C. Public Library. That night, many members of the homeless community were sitting

inside at the tables. Some were listening to music, some were reading. All were dressed warmly in many garments. Stern and Koshes stopped to talk to a Vietnamese man who was listening to music. They offered him a kind word, which he accepted, and a blanket, which he refused.

This is how a nightly checkup works for the GMC. They look around alleys and bridges and they walk around Dupont Circle, seeking out certain chronically homeless people. Sometimes all they do is ask a person how they are doing, and sometimes they may save a life, perhaps by providing an emergency blanket or taking someone off the streets.

After Stern and Koshes made their rounds they drove to a local Georgetown church and entered a great room with beds along the walls on either side. Tables were set up in the middle of the room and a television played the local news. That church, part of the GMC's winter shelter program, gave ten people a warm meal and a cot for the night.

The GMC's winter shelter program is in operation from November through March; the program rotates among different Georgetown congregations, changing location every two weeks. The shelter opens at 7:00 p.m. and closes at 7:00 a.m. the next morning.

Inside that room in that church on that March night, a young man named Ruben Coyburn played the piano in the corner. Coyburn, a Texan and former member of

the Marine Corps, has traveled to Spain, Italy, even Qatar. Today he is homeless, but he remains optimistic about his future. He studies music at the University of the District Columbia and hopes to one day become a professional musician. Not only can he play the piano, he also plays bass, and he keeps his instrument next to his bed. He loves '60s and '70s rock and jazz and admires Sam Cooke, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton and John Coltrane. He loves going around the town, spending time in the parks, where he enjoys nature and meditates. Coyburn sees the positives in the shelter, how it can help with his studies, and is very thankful for the GMC.

"It means the world," Coyburn said. "[Without the GMC] I wouldn't be able to study with a high level of focus. It provides stability. It provides focus and stability."

People who stay in the shelter come from all walks of life. In addition to Coyburn, there was Behzad Javanmardi, a 43 year old Iranian refugee who learned English after coming to this country and has never been able to find a job. Another man staying at the shelter that night was from Egypt.

The GMC could not operate without its many volunteers. Among them is Rich Bland, a Washington attorney who works for Save the Children; he helps out with the meal and sometimes spends the night. In a recent Lent service, Bland's preacher spoke of the importance of study, of si-

lence, and of service. Bland considers it his duty to serve his community, and he does so through this program. He quoted James 2-14, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead." If you are not helping others, you are not fulfilling your belief as a Christian, Bland said.

***This is how a nightly checkup works for the GMC. They look around alleys and bridges ... seeking out certain chronically homeless people.***

The shelter is a welcoming place. Everyone appreciates each other. The homeless people who use the GMC appreciate the support, and the volunteers are happy to provide it. Malissa Johnson-Bey, a shelter monitor, summed up the reason she volunteers. "Working with the public and being of service [is rewarding], even if it's just a smile or a kind word."

Dinner that night was chicken potpie with bread, prepared by two volunteers. Everyone gathered in a circle, introduced themselves, and said a prayer. They sat together at a table to enjoy a good meal and each other's company.

## Hopes and Anxiety Mark Deliberations Over CCNV's Future

By Reginald Black  
Vendor, "Da Street Reportin Artist"

What do homeless men and women staying at the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV) shelter have to say about the future of the aging facility? What have other cities done to creatively address the needs of their homeless residents? Those were two of the questions pondered by attendees at a recent meeting of a specially convened task force charged with planning for the possible redevelopment of the facility located at 425 2nd Street NW.

The CCNV task force is charged with developing a set of recommendations to help city officials chart the next chapter in the story of the shelter before the 2016 expiration of a federal requirement that the building be used for homeless services. With 1,350 beds, CCNV is the city's largest shelter, but the former federal college building is badly in need of repair. Task

force members are weighing the advisability of repairing the existing building, completely rebuilding on the site, or providing homeless services elsewhere.

A majority of the 159 shelter residents who responded to a survey about the future of the shelter said that they value the current location of the facility near Judiciary Square because it is close to transportation, services and jobs.

Some also cited the historic importance of the shelter, which has served the city's homeless since the 1980s. Many survey respondents spoke of the importance of providing permanent supportive housing for the homeless and affordable housing for seniors in any future project. Many also said that people who currently use the shelter, and others who are particularly vulnerable, should be given priority for placements in a new facility.

Holly Dennison of the New York-based CSH spoke of the large supportive and affordable housing developments her

firm has built. The 910 DeKalb project in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood offers more than 60 affordable and supportive housing units for families and formerly homeless adults. The Castle Gardens project includes 114 units, which serve a mix of low-income and formerly homeless families, with services especially designed to help formerly incarcerated residents.

Dennison asked attendees to imagine similar projects in the District.

"We have so many opportunities here," she said.

Next to share with the group was Richard Bradley, executive director of Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), who chairs the strategic planning subcommittee of the task force.

"Our first intention was to ask what are our needs here?" Bradley said. A challenge that lies ahead is finding the right mix of services and housing options, Bradley added. He spoke in support of building afford-

able and supportive housing, "but there is still a need for shelter."

DC City Council member Jim Graham, who chairs the council's human services committee asked about large homeless programs around the country that provide a mix of shelter and supportive housing.

"What is the largest shelter with permanent supportive housing?" Graham asked. "What are we talking about here?"

Bradley spoke of shelter models in New York and Philadelphia with 500 units. Graham pointed out that currently, the District has more than 1,000 units of permanent supportive housing.

"We are in the process of expanding permanent supportive housing," Graham said.

Graham went on to reassure current shelter residents that whatever changes are made at CCNV will not happen overnight.

"This shelter is not closing in two years," said Graham. "Please don't have that anxiety this place is going to shut down."



## Painting the Way Home

By Joanna Schneider  
Volunteer

In a new exhibit of paintings called "The Way Home" artists from Miriam's Kitchen explore ideas about homes and the experience of homelessness.

At a March 7 reception, many of the artists were on hand to talk about their work, on display this month at gallery located in a church near Dupont Circle.

The artists were given prompts to help them create the paintings.

One prompt "Dream House" asked artists to think about the following questions.

"What does home mean to you? Think about a home you have had in the past. What would you change, what would you keep the same? Now, create an artwork or poem depicting your dream house of the future."

A second prompt "Personal Journey Through Homelessness" asked artists to think back to the place in their lives where their homelessness began.

"The journey of becoming homeless starts somewhere," the prompt began. "Reflect back on what circumstances or relationships caused you to become homeless. Identify what has had the most impact during your journey. What would you change? What would you keep the same?"

Inspired by these questions, the contributors created diverse, innovative pieces, their only limitation being that the art

needed to fit on a standard canvas. The artists incorporated mixed media, bringing three-dimensional representations to the canvases. Because many of Miriam's Kitchen's artists focus on beading and jewelry-making, a number of the pieces incorporated beads, strings, and wire.

An intimate Friday-evening reception at the Church of the Pilgrims also included spoken word performances, which evolved into a night of poetry, storytelling, and singing. Some of the presentations honored the support that Miriam's Kitchen has offered to people living through homelessness.

At Miriam's said one grateful speaker "you're welcome every time you walk in the door."

The artwork was created in support of The Way Home campaign, which seeks to end chronic homelessness in the District of Columbia by 2017.

The pieces will remain on display at the Dupont Pilgrims Gallery, which is located at the Church of the Pilgrims, 2201 P Street NW. The gallery, which features rotating exhibits by local artists and provides space for spiritual reflection is open on first Fridays of the month from 6 to 8 p.m., on Sundays from noon until 2 pm and by request.

## Unseen Beauty

By Sam Bermas-Dawes, Editorial Intern

The project started with 22 disposable cameras and a request; bring back the beauty you find in your world.

When the pictures came back, Sue Bracey, curator of Unseen Beauty, a new photography exhibit in Takoma Park, MD, said she was blown away by the quality of the pictures.

"I was moved," she said.

Unseen Beauty, a photography exhibit featuring homeless and formerly-homeless photographers from the Silver Spring-area, will go up at the Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, MD in mid-March.

When she first started the project, friends told Bracey that she was wasting her money.

"They told me all those cameras will end up at the liquor store," the retired federal worker said.

Bracey got eleven cameras back the first time, and now she thinks her project has the potential to change way the homeless are viewed in her community.

"All of us can certainly recall seeing homeless people, but Unseen Beauty helps us see more than we can at first

blush by showing us what the world and beauty looks like through their eyes," said Bracey.

"The exhibit is a lens into not only what is beautiful in the eyes of people who are part of the subculture, but also into our own understanding of our neighbors without homes. It lets us know that even in blight, there is also beauty."

The photographers benefit as well, Bracey says. One of the project's most active participants was able to move off of the streets after obtaining an assistant chef's certificate from the DC Culinary School and now works two jobs.

The exhibit is on display in the Cafeteria Conference Room on level LL2 in the Washington Adventist Hospital at 7600 Maple Ave. Go check it out!

Photography from the exhibit can be seen online at [Unseenbeauty.org](http://Unseenbeauty.org).



## *The End of Winter*

By Chris Shaw, "The Cowboy Poet"

The end of  
winter  
fades slowly  
like some  
proponents  
of global  
warming lowly  
but alas, alak  
I fear  
it will be  
back!

## *The War of Seasons*

By Veda Simpson, Vendor

There is a heck of a war going on;  
Spring has knocked but Winter won't  
open the door.

Every time Spring tries to give Winter a  
clue, a cold blistery snowstorm comes  
riding through.

Thursday the 20th is the first day of  
Spring.

We should see cherry blossoms  
and crickets will begin to sing.  
It's time that love should be filling  
the air.

C'mon Mr. Winter you just don't play fair.  
It's time for the bears to wake and  
you to go to sleep.

Now rest yourself until it's time,  
for you and Fall again will meet!!

## *Family*

By Marcus Green, Vendor

What is family? Is it biological, just sharing the same blood?  
Blood is nothing without caring, sharing and loving someone with no strings attached.  
My new family is the readers, because without you there is no me.  
God works through you all. Thanks for your support in our future endeavors.

## *A Lot Worse*

By James Daniel Johnson, Vendor

I've suffered from failure and self-destruction  
I'm familiar with hard times  
I now reflect on my adversities in the form of poetry that rhymes

Strung out on mind altering chemicals  
For many years I lived without hope  
I was addicted to alcohol and crack, and occasionally snorted some dope

I lived in shelters and abandoned buildings  
A sad reality for any man  
I've slept on cardboard boxes, and once ate out of a garbage can

Yet, for nearly four years I've been clean and sober  
For me, it's not too late, though it seemed that life had passed me by  
Due to the Lord's grace, I no longer get high

However, periodically I encounter obstacles  
People with no integrity get in my way  
They'll answer to God, for their insidious character he'll make them pay

With faith, I claim a blessed future  
While acknowledging this fact, I must humbly rehearse  
Stay grateful to God and stop complaining  
Because for me life was once A LOT WORSE

## CHILDREN'S ART: LIFTOFF

*Created at DC  
General after a  
NASA professional  
visited the shelter.*



In the District, 2,453 schoolage children experienced homelessness last year. That number amounts to about 1 in 20 children, or more than 1 child per classroom. The Homeless Children's Playtime Project visits six different transitional housing and emergency shelter programs to provide weekly activities, healthy snacks, and opportunities to play and learn to as many children as possible.



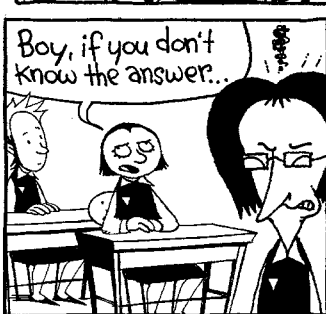
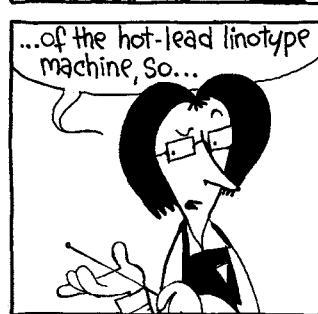
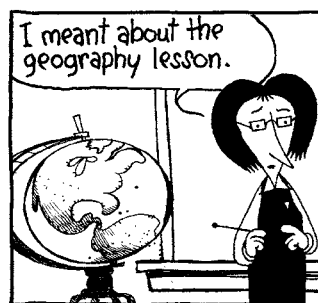
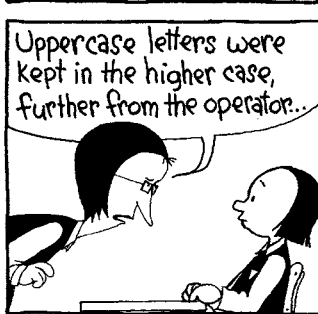
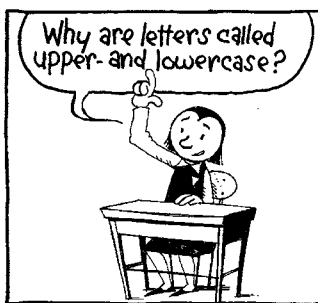
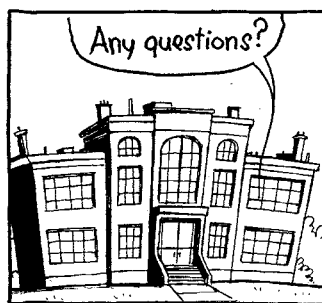
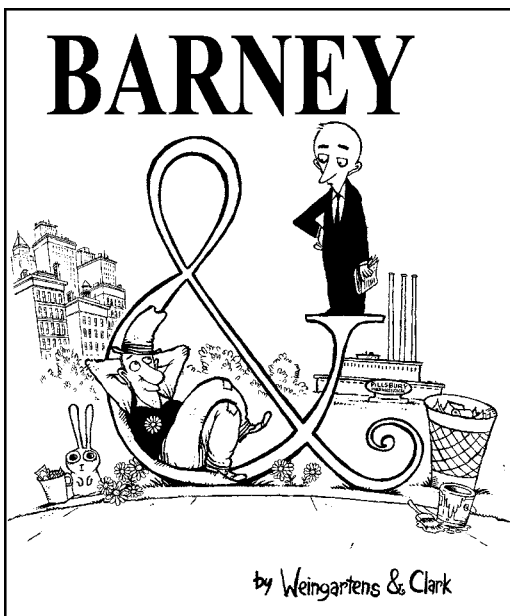
Courtesy of the Homeless Children's Playtime Project  
[HTTP://WWW.PLAYTIMEPROJECT.NET](http://www.playtimeproject.net)





# BARNEY & CLYDE

BARNEY & CLYDE IS A COMIC STRIP ABOUT AN UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN A HOMELESS MAN AND A TYCOON. IT'S ABOUT OUR MODERN, POLARIZED ECONOMY OF HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS. IT RE-EXAMINES TRADITIONAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS, FAILURE, AND THE NATURE OF HAPPINESS.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS: GENE WEINGARTEN IS A COLLEGE DROPOUT AND THE NATIONALLY SYNDICATED HUMOR COLUMNIST FOR THE WASHINGTON POST. DAN WEINGARTEN IS A FORMER COLLEGE DROPOUT AND A CURRENT COLLEGE STUDENT MAJORING IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY. MANY THANKS TO GENE WEINGARTEN AND THE WASHINGTON POST WRITER'S GROUP FOR ALLOWING STREET SENSE TO RUN BARNEY & CLYDE.



## Stranded at Reagan National



A sign board made and written by the public at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang, Malaysia. AP PHOTO/DANIEL CHAN

By Patricia Henry  
Vendor

I'm sitting in front of the windows at the Washington National Airport, watching planes take off and land, wondering if some of the planes that look so small once in the air could be spy drones that have been in recent news.

It's not because of the weather that I'm stranded at the airport, but because I was kicked out again from the shelter for twice being late leaving in the morning. The only notice said I was three minutes late leaving one morning. The staff member said she actually didn't have to give me formal eviction and warning notices.

Since I was soon expecting to get my own place, I didn't even ask for a fair hearing - I lose fair hearings anyway.

But, here I am at the airport this weekend, waiting for a housing appointment on Tuesday. I've been eating at Dunkin'

Donuts (a travel favorite of mine - I would have donuts and coffee when I traveled from the Boston airport and was waiting for a ride at the Dunkin' Donuts) and Cusi, where I had delicious tomato soup and a tuna, lettuce, tomato, and cheese sandwich on flatbread with potato chips and a soda. It cost \$15, a little out of my range, but I got an extra slice of flatbread that I'll have with coffee tonight -- if I'm hungry after that large meal.

On Saturday, I tried to get to a demonstration that was especially important to me because I'm still trying to locate and claim a bag of personal, legal, and activist papers, forgotten on a crowded DC bus at the beginning of May

**IF ANYONE HAS POSITIVE INFORMATION ON THIS (THAT IS, INFORMATION WITH WHICH I CAN GET MY PAPERS BACK), I WOULD OFFER \$500.00 (FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS) FOR THERE SAFE RETURN.)**

## Same Sex Marriage, Controversial Topic

By Ashley McMullen, *Vendor*



Over the past 10 years, the hot topic of same-sex marriage has many people going back-and-forth. There are people in the United States who are for same-sex marriage,

saying people have the right to marry whomever they choose, while others say it goes against the morals of the Bible.

I believe people have the right to marry whomever they choose, no matter what's in the Bible. Massachusetts was the first state to approve same-sex marriage, followed by Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire, Washington D.C., New York, Washington, Maine, Maryland, Rhode Island, Delaware, Minnesota, New Jersey, Hawaii, Illinois, and New Mexico. Most recently, Utah, Oklahoma, Virginia, and Texas have legalized same-sex marriage.

***I believe people have the right to marry whomever they choose, no matter what's in the Bible.***

I honestly think that every state should have same-sex marriage allowed to avoid discrimination against the gay and lesbian couples who want to marry each other and don't want to have to travel to another state to get married. I also applaud the celebrities who have recently come out of the closet such as Robin Roberts, Michael Sam, Jason Collins, and Ellen Page. Since these celebrities have come out the closet, more people, particularly young people such as myself, decided to be more open about their sexuality. These people also received numerous of support from the entertainment world as well people from LGBT community. I also urge more people to come out and don't be scared to be who you are or don't care what people think about you. There are high school students who have come out and are getting bullied by other students and/or teachers. Once incident that really stands out to me is the bullying of Destin Holmes. Destin Holmes is a gay teen from Mississippi, who came out and was bullied by students, teachers, and school administration. People of the LGBT community should be themselves without being bullied at the hands of other people. The topic of same-sex marriage will be controversial for years to come and more and more people should marry whomever they want to.

## How the Civil Rights Agenda Has Failed Black Americans in Today's Society

By Jeffery McNeil, *Vendor*



There has been a narrative that's been told for so long that many believe it's reality. It is this: that blacks are monolithic in their thoughts, patterns, and actions.

Most whites assume all blacks eat from the same dish, vote Democratic, support liberal causes and want reparations instead of work.

Since the early days of the civil rights movement, this viewpoint has been espoused by self-appointed spokesmen who suppress any viewpoint that doesn't call for government intervention or wealth redistribution. To not want to habitually rehash old wounds of slavery and Jim Crow will have you excommunicated in the black community. Implying that we move away from the past is considered being a sellout. A black person is better off swimming through a pool of sharks than not supporting the civil rights agenda.

When I was young I was militant and angry. I too was a supporter. However, I learned over time that the world does not owe me a damn thing. Despite our country's troubled history, America is a better place to live than Ukraine.

My aim is not to bash young activists because when you're young it is natural to hate order and stability. It is natural to want to change the world. Revolution is intoxicating. We want to burn things to the ground. However, when you get older you pick your battles more wisely. I say to young freedom fighters that though there will be plenty of battles worth fighting, liberal causes aren't among them.

My anger is directed toward the liberal intelligentsia; the academics, journalists, and entertainers who aid, abet and promote self-defeating behaviors that undermine the development of the black underclass.

Not everyone believes the key for advancement is to march in demonstrations, carrying banners asking for jobs and public assistance. The truth is the civil rights movement has been hijacked!

Malcolm X preached against welfare, and extolled blacks to become self-sufficient. His conservative views clashed with the liberal ones of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was King's vision that prevailed. Did silencing the conservative viewpoint improve or hinder the black underclass? By focusing on only on victimhood the civil rights leaders turned a blind eye on blacks' self-defeating behaviors. Because the civil rights establishment has refused to look at behavioral and cultural pathologies, one can make an argument

that the lives of blacks have continued to deteriorate since they left their self-reliant roots and aligned themselves with liberal Democrats.

The rise of crime in the inner cities can be linked to liberal film producers who have always made a fetish of the dysfunctional elements of black culture and glorified prostitutes, pimps and hustlers. Hollywood directors looking for new ways to get jollies worked in tandem with corrupt black leadership, giving rise to "blaxploitation" films such as Claudia, Superfly, and Dolomite. This genre helped reinforce what many whites perceived blacks to be; sex crazed, baby makers.

***I say to young freedom fighters that though there will be plenty of battle worth fighting, liberal cause aren't among them.***

I ask minorities who call themselves Democrats: what did the civil rights leaders do in response to these films? Did they boycott shops demanding that Hollywood stop portraying blacks this way? No! Instead they joined forces with liberal elites and promoted even raunchier and more provocative films under the guise of free speech. The so-called black leadership never questioned the impact these films would have on inner city kids starving for role models. The civil rights establishment also turned a blind eye to the criminal justice system. Young blacks went from segregation into incarceration.

I wonder how much longer these civil rights charlatans can live off the good names of others? Conservatives are not to blame for the decline of cities such as Detroit and Chicago. These predominantly black cities handpicked their own representatives that played the race card, robbed the tills, then ran these cities into the ground. How many promises, excuses and alibis can people hear before someone calls them out for the frauds they are?

Many of us are tired hearing "dream speeches." Many of us are sobering to the reality that problems blacks are facing are not because of white oppression but because many are still stuck in the civil rights mindset.

## Obama Letter Finale

By Shuhrajon Ahmadjonov, *Vendor*



In the case of massacres, such as the case with James Holmes, the shooter at the Aurora, Colorado theater shooting, an authoritative parliamentary commission should be established. It is better to write a choice of members of the commission in the law.

In the case of the next mass murder, the Commission will study all materials concerning the murder. First, in this case, heads and staff of law enforcement agencies and intelligence services will not be able to destroy the true information about the hidden work and harassment of certain citizens (i.e., James Holmes) from some heads and the staff of power structures or intelligence services and their serving informants, provokers.

Second, serious omissions and illegal actions of some heads and/or employees and also informants against certain citizens and inhabitants of the United States, will be found out. These are serious violations of human rights.

Third, on the basis of the analysis of this information, there should be legislation and laws regulating the work of heads and staff of the law enforcement agencies and intelligence services.

The serious and complex approach to studying and legislatively regulating power structures and intelligence services by creating a data bank will produce the following results: First, it will stop the illegal intervention of the law enforcement agencies and intelligence services in the private lives of citizens and inhabitants of the United States. Second, it will sharply reduce the number of massacres, such as those carried out by James Holmes, Adam Lanza, who was the Sandy Hook shooter, and others. Third, it will sharply reduce the number of suicides of U.S. citizens. Fourth, it will clear the ranks of law enforcement agencies and intelligence services of employees and heads that violate the law. And finally, fifth, the authority of the U.S President, congressmen, deputies, law enforcement agencies and intelligence services will rise among citizens of the United States.

So, I suggest you take the initiative to create a data bank on the work of law enforcement agencies and intelligence services. It will solve many problems around the illegal intervention of intelligence services and law enforcement agencies in the private lives of citizens and the frequency of massacres and suicides in the United States.

***The End.***

## Women's History Month

By Angie Whitehurst, *Vendor*



Women's History Month comes once a year.

We have come a "long way baby."

Younger people might not know that women did not have maternity leave, got kicked out of school and shunned from society for being pregnant and unmarried, God-forbid divorced. A married woman might not be hired. It was unspoken but thought that she would get pregnant and could not perform or would quit to be a housewife. Even more interesting is that law schools, medical schools and engineering schools often refused to accept women as students. Women could work as secretaries, sales clerks, teachers, maids, migrant workers and maybe social workers. Our choices were slim

However, contradictory, but true, the economics of necessity temporarily erased those unspoken taboos. During World War I and II, women drove cars, raised crops, chopped wood, worked in factories and did whatever was needed. They also served in the military, Red Cross, USO and many other service and self-help organizations. They even flew planes delivering mail and supplies.

Some of my relatives were women like that. They ran the farm, raised the children and did double time to keep the home front vibrant and going. During World War II, women from other countries left their homes to come to the U.S. to help farmers raise food for the war effort.

The bottom line is this: survival and necessity makes every hand, skilled and unskilled, important. Taboos, rituals and unfounded thinking go out the window.

## Starting a conversation

By Yu, *Vendor*



I'm goin' from place to place. Is there really more that I need to see? What do I really look for?

Just another direction tonight that I did not take today. Time is moving right along, while the days keep going by. Not that anyone is complaining about the step by step process that keeps this all happening. What more is necessary to get what needs to be gotten? A story is a story. How should it end up?

On the streets of D.C., anywhere leading to someplace. It has to lead to someplace. A new name for a direction that is starting now. There was just not any other way that it could be done.

## A Thought For The Day

By Jacqueline Turner, *Vendor*



I saw a documentary recently, which argued against the effectiveness of antidepressants. In fact, the documentary said it has proven such medication can cause memory loss and aggressive behavior.

Medications for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder are also known to

cause suicidal thoughts and aggressive behavior. In fact, it seems most of the medications on the market have more side effects than benefits.

Americans should think twice about looking for a pill for help. They should instead think about being healthy and getting clean air and exercise.

The documentary made me think about these issues.

## Devil's Due

By Robert Warren, *Vendor*

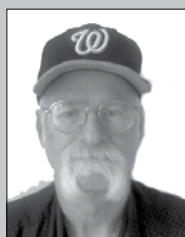


I've heard it be said that in life you have to give the devil his due. Isn't it a fact that the devil is an open enemy to me and you?

He will lie in wait for you, to work hard to kill you. Whisper so many wrongs, and you will never know who could be his helper, to see you lost. His main goal is to keep you confused about who he is and what you are.

But all you have to do is take the Lord of all the worlds as a shield. He will see you through. The devil is just a test for you, if we only knew. There is a light for you that will pierce the devil through and through. He will never be out to mislead you.

So many lies he told that I and maybe you have to live our lives, too. Only by his grace and mercy do I write these words for you. We have given the devil all he is due. Now leave him in hell. Let the Lord's love lead you to the best destination.



## My Thank You

By Ron Verquer, *Vendor*

1980s leader says, "Cities, no money for you."

Thanking black people for saving the turntable  
For records playing the blues

Trying to explain vinyl records

Needle in the groove

Thanks from this old skinny white guy

Who likes jazzy blues.

# How the Rich Can Help

By Gwynette Smith, *Vendor*

Rich people have the luxury of having more options than other people, and the holidays are no exception.

How might a rich person spend Christmas, New Year's, Easter, or any other holiday? He or she could start with a visit to a shelter or several shelters to leave clothing, toiletries and several dollars for each person, including people who live on the street.

A wealthy person could give blankets and food to people outside the shelter and leave some extra money for those who could prove they need financial help because of dire events that have occurred. Necessities for people in the shelter could be left with a responsible director or staff member. A wealthy person who knows of jobs or job training programs could leave information to be posted. He or she could also support various charities.

Having done his or her part for others around the holidays, a wealthy person and his or her family could then concentrate on having a good time and enjoying the season without feeling bad that all the less fortunate people are in the same situation they were before the holiday season.

Wealthy people can travel to learn about their ancestral roots and learn about their family background. Or perhaps they and the rest of their party would want a vacation of revelry.

A wealthy person might decide to travel

south of the border. This trip could start in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the country's capital city. Maybe this affluent tourist would stay in Old Town, with its historical statues and beautiful, colorful old houses. He or she could then go on to the hip, young, artist-filled region of Condado, and drink tequila sunrises and listen to the Spanish guitars while gazing out on palm trees and beaches. After taking in the scenery and nightclubs, the traveler could spend some time at the beaches to swim and lie on the sand before leaving.



The next stop could be Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, a colonial city on the ocean that used to be a small fishing village. The tourist could visit the house that Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton owned, drink mojitos, and eat some arroz con pollo. If it was Christmas time, he or she could see beautiful poinsettias.

After sightseeing and taking photos, the

wealthy traveler could head off to another destination: Ixtapa. Ixtapa is a popular resort with waterfalls and cliffs. There, a rich person could visit spas, go shopping, party all night while drinking margaritas, and enjoying exotic foods.

The next stop could be the border town of Juarez, where children would be carolling at Christmas. One song they might sing while carrying candles would be "Adeste Fidelis," before moving on to "Feliz Navidad." Before leaving there, a wealthy person and his or her family could see the town, go to church, or drink sangrias.

The last stop on the itinerary could be Acapulco, a formerly popular resort that has fallen on bad times. While there, the person could play tennis, drink Cristal champagne, and party all night

While away, the adults would probably have taken turns entertaining any children -- if they were with them -- and stay with them at night. They would have probably stayed at hotels with swimming pools and tennis lessons for children to enjoy, perhaps even horseback riding lessons.

Then they would board their plane or boat and return home. They'd blow a kiss to their hosts in the distance and say to them what I say to you, "un prospero ano nuevo llena de bendiciones de Dios que espero para toda del mundo y mi."\*

*\*translation: a prosperous new year filled with God's blessings of hope for all of me and all of the world.*

# The Mysterious Masonic Ring

## Chapter 9: On the Square

By John Mick Matthews  
Vendor

*Thanks again to all my readers, fans, and especially the customers who have asked for my autograph. Now, without further ado, Chapter Nine of The Mysterious Masonic Ring...*

Kittie wasn't kidding when she said my ring could be a threat to the spiritual well being of the human race. If it were truly the key to the Templar Treasure, and if said Treasure contained an autobiographical gospel penned by the hand of Yeshua of Nazareth, known to the faithful as Jesus Christ, in which he denies being any more than a holy man and a prophet. If such a book got into the hands of someone with the right resources to get it released credibly into the general public, the resulting backswing against Christianity could conceivably bring the world to its knees.

So, yeah, I meant it when I said I'd make sure Bowler Hat didn't get the ring. Besides, it belonged to me, dammit, and it was gonna remain mine. Now before I start calling the ring "Precious," let me just say I was pretty indignant at the old British geezer for trying for it to begin with. Now, with the spiritual fate of the world tied in to boot, I was more determined to keep hold of it.

Sure, I'd play his little game, take as much of his money as I could and laugh all the way to the bank. It would serve him right for trying to play me like that.

I couldn't let Kittie in on my plans, though, for two reasons. First, if she was gonna keep secrets, well, what's good for the goose and all. Most importantly, though, was if Bowler Hat was as dangerous as Kittie implied, then I needed to keep an Eastern Star like her away from him.

I was to meet him tonight by the statue of Ben Franklin in front of the Post Office Pavillion. But first I had a Masonic appointment to keep at Franklin Square today. After showering and breaking our fast at the Burger King just outside Chinatown, we decided to take a leisurely stroll down to Franklin.

Located between I and K Streets and 13th and 14th Streets N.W., Franklin Square was once known as downtown's open air crock I'm betting \$\$\$ 'tis "crack"--market before the shelter at the former Franklin School on 13th and I Streets was shut down about two years

prior. Today, it's one of a series of downtown parks where the local office workers go to hit up the sometimes controversial food trucks that line up K Street every weekday afternoon.

So, supplied respectively with a cup of hot chocolate and a large coffee from the McDonald's down 13th at New York Avenue, Kittie and I took a seat on the bench nearest the school. After about 20 minutes of idle chitchat, gulps of our respective hot drink, and a round of Newports, a Park Police officer pulled over behind us on I Street.

Now, with all the money that had been coming our way the last few days, getting harassed by those jackasses was nowhere on my agenda. The thing you need to keep in mind when dealing with the Park Police is this: these guys don't have much of a life and even less of a job. This fact generally means that they tend to treat an open container case the same way a Metropolitan Police officer might treat a dealer with three eight balls of crack broken down for easy sale. In other words, instead of a ticket, you're spending the night in lock-up, and either way the arresting officers are going to overreact to pretty much anything you do or say.

So when the Park Police officer in question approached us, there was just one thing to do.

I looked him dead in the eye, gave him a toothy grin, and said in my most innocent, wholesome and, dare I say it, 'whitest' voice I could come up with, "Good morning, officer, it's a lovely day today, what can I do to help you?"

I've used this approach with cops dozens of times. It really messes with their heads. I've gotten reactions from them ranging from, "These aren't the droids you're looking for," with a glazed look in their eyes, to genuine fear because all their superior posturing got deflated faster than the Macy's Snoopy balloon the day after Thanksgiving.

From the looks of him, though, I think all I did was piss him off.

"Sir, ma'am," he began, "we've received complaints that a pair matching your descriptions were sitting on this bench a few minutes ago amid the smell of marijuana. May I see your IDs please." I think Jean-Luc Picard said it best: "Merde."



## HANGING WITH SENATOR MARSH (May Be Hazardous To Your Health...)

Half a day and many miles north of Billy and Elaine and company stood an immense stucco mansion with an enormous green caped roof and olive awnings to match.

As the sunlight faded into dusk, much laughter and clinking of glasses was heard, wafting out of the growing shadows.

Inside, Skipper, wife of the stocky, red-faced junior senator from Tennessee, winced at the depraved tone of this big-wig party in their home and quickly pulled shut the flocked, silken beige draperies across the front living room windows.

"Haw-Hawww--have I got one for you, son," growled Hastings Marsh, the Tennessean, as he mock embraced the city's mayor, mustached and much shorter than his drunken host.

"No-lissen' to MY story," began Mayor Kelsey.

"First, clean that crap off your face, bud," Marsh broke in, with a jovial jab to the mayor's midsection. "What IS that

white powder, anyhow," he whispered disingenuously.

Caught with his addiction showing, Mayor

Kelsey blurted, "Wh'WHAT? It's...uh, it's donuts, senator. Hostess DONUTS--Why heh, look at the BOX."

"Hogwash, your honor. Now straighten up and hear me out," Marsh said.

Marsh pulled a scroll of fancy blueprints from a hidden drawer of the living room trestle table.

"Wait til you folks get a blink on this plan I've come up with for downtown D.C. These 'improvements' are gonna curl your hair!"

The mayor, carefully wiping his mouth with a fresh napkin, intoned, "But it's already curly!"

Mrs. Skipper Marsh quickly sent up a dry retort, "Of course it is.. You've been in on this sordid little deal right from the start!"

Marsh practically screamed over his wife, "SHUT UP!! That's enough, and if you don't like what we're doing, go ahead and LEAVE!"

"You know, I believe I'll do just that!" Skipper pulled her paisley wrap around her simple blue Givenchy dress and, jumping through the startled throng of guests, dashed for her metallic-green Buick Electra convertible, nearly knocking down the Thai ambassador as she left the house.

"Forget her," murmured Marsh to nobody in particular. "Hey. Folks, Listen up, 'cause you all will just LOVE what we have in store for all the space-wasting bums downtown.."

Marsh rattled the plans with a huge flourish, and spread them out for all to see.

"So, who likes flophouses ... and the filthy parasites who dwell therein!"

Groans went up.

"NOOOO...BOOO..." was the universal response.

"That's right ... How about it, mayor?"

Mayor Kelsey looked around nervously, then squeaked, "I'm all for it. Sure I am!"

Marsh bent over the diagram. "See, my friends, 'Luxury Inn'... 'Empire Corporate HQ,'

'Diamond Estates Inn,' that's for only WELL-HEELED visitors ... Do you 'Comprende?'"

One lady in diamonds and a mink shawl chirped out, "How do you move the 'Intransigents?'"

"Ohh, my dear lady," oozed Marsh, "that is for US to know and THEM to find out,"

Senator Marsh coughed and held his hand up. "Now, if you all'll excuse me.."

Marsh slipped into a tiny paneled study with Wanda Sholes, a local TV reporter. He quickly proffered a silver vial of high-quality Bolivian nose cocaine. "Nice 'f you comin', Wanda..."

They took turns taking a deep sniff of the drug.

"Of course, Senator,"

He chuckled, and moved closer to Wanda, almost hovering.

"Yeah, for us to know and them NOT to find out!!"

Down Mass Avenue, past the Naval Observatory, Skipper Marsh, the one-time Miss Memphis 1963, roared down the hill, headed nowhere in particular.

(to be continued)



ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN POOLE

## Looking for a Stepping Stone

By Leonard Hyater, *Vendor*

My name is Leonard and I am homeless. I stay at the shelter and have been there for a while.

But I am looking for another job in the mortgage business, as soon as I renew my license.

I've been working since I was 16 years old. I can remember when I spent the night over at my Grandma Dorothy's house. One morning, I got up while she was cooking my breakfast and I asked her if I could have some money to go to the movies. She told me, "Boy, I don't have money to give you to go to a movie, but you can earn the money cleaning up the backyard." I had a similar experience with my Grandma Roxie.

It was a blessing to have them instill such values in me.

I guess you might ask why I'm homeless. It started two years ago when I lost my job. I lost my place and ended up moving into a shelter. I had to make the best of

it. Some friends asked why I didn't move back home.

It's because I learned to take care of myself since I was a little boy. When I was a child, my mother and father would feed the pigeons on our balcony. I remember one pigeon sitting atop two eggs until they hatched. When they got big enough, we kicked them off the balcony. They had to learn to take care of themselves.

Being homeless is not the greatest feeling. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemies.

As for working at Street Sense, it's just something to do and it's a job until I find something better. I just want to say that anybody can be homeless. The question is what you're going to do about it. I don't plan on being homeless for the rest of my life. I am looking for a job in my field. Working for the Street Sense newspaper is just a stepping stone, putting some money in my pocket. Right now, I am just taking this one day at a time.



## I'm Not Giving Up

By Elizabeth Bryant, *Vendor*

My name is Elizabeth Bryant.

I was adopted when I was 5 months old. I have eight brothers and a sister, but three of my brothers have died.

I don't know if my birth mother knows about me. I didn't learn I was adopted until I was nine years old.

I started drinking and using drugs. I got raped by two boys at school. My oldest daughter's father raped me when I was 13 years old. I somewhat forgave him and continued to see him. When I gave birth to our daughter at 16, he didn't come to the hospital because he was having sex with my cousin. He never claimed his daughter.

I dropped out of school in 10th grade.

I married Arthur Bryant when I was 23 years old. We had Bernice and remained married for 16 years. There were times when I thought I was finished drinking and using drugs, but I hated myself and

went back to using. It was a real roller coaster ride.

I had a good upbringing. I was baptised when I was 9 years old, I sang in the choir and went to Sunday school.

My adoptive mother brought me up with good values, but there were a lot of things I didn't understand. I continued going to treatment for drug and alcohol abuse but I wouldn't quit and had to return for treatment. It was a miracle if I could last a week without alcohol or drugs.

Now, I have been sober and clean for seven years. It hasn't been easy, but I trust God, the Holy Spirit and Jesus. They have blessed me and I have gone back to school. I go to school from 9 a.m. until noon on Mondays and Thursdays, and I go to meetings, work and therapy. I'm really getting better, and I'm determined not to give up.

I'm 47 years old now, and I know there are no excuses.

## My Katrina: Part 6

By Gerald Anderson, *Vendor*

*Previously: After the helicopter arrived and medics delivered Keisha's baby, my buddies and I once again headed out to face the rising floodwaters. Due to fallen trees and wires, we had to push the boat we'd found. It was like wading through a nightmare: lifeless puppies floating by, dogs with the mange paddling for their lives, families praying on porches, and signs like one pleading, GRANDMA INSIDE NEEDS DIALYSIS! Screams from those trapped inside their homes carried my thoughts to the guys I had left behind in Orleans Parish Prison after my release, only a few weeks earlier. I later learned that deputies had gone home to their families, abandoning the prisoners, who were locked in their cells; some inmates never made it out..*



On the way back to the projects, my friends and I moved five bodies—two ladies and three men—out of the water and put them on dry ground. We did this out of re-

spect, but also because the odor of wet, decaying corpses was making the neighborhood stink. One guy . . . he was a white guy, a taxi driver . . . was purple and his body was hard but he was so blown up, it looked like you could take a needle and pop him.

When we finally got back to the projects, we let every family know that in less than 10 hours, Katrina would hit. We told them what the helicopter rescuers had told us, "When it hits, crouch down on the floor." I wondered whether this was how it felt inside a plane that's about to crash.

The steady whooshing sound got deeper. The whole projects were shaking. It was August, and if I weren't so drenched, I would be sweating. But the way those gusts blew the rain all helter skelter, it chilled like blasts of air conditioning.

We had a whole stack of food boxes we had collected in the boat. When I distributed them to families at the projects, I felt like the military, supporting others, helping them survive.

My buddies and I swapped turns sleeping; someone was always up to watch that everybody was okay. If one of us said, "Let me catch a nap," another would say, "Get some rest. I ain't goin' nowhere."

Some younger kids tried to put on brave faces, but I could see fear in their eyes. To keep the them from going down to play in the water, we blocked the stairways on both ends of the balcony, which was the length of a football field.

Calio asked us guys, "You scared? Wat-cha think gonna happen?"

I said, "If you scared, you shoulda gone with the helicopter guys who took Keisha

and her baby. Y'all shoulda thought about going to church all these years."

People say there's not a God, but someone had to be looking after us. We were like one huge family on this big old balcony. I led prayers for all the men, women, children, and even puppy dogs. "Lord we come together today to remove this thing that we are facing. Not just for us but for everyone else that's facing this terrible thing they say going to happen.

"God always say two or more gathered together, he's in the midst. Not just for us—people in the hospital, people who can't walk, people who can't see. We ask for everyone."

Just then, a friend ran out on the balcony. His mother was having a seizure. From being in prison I knew what to do; I'd had cellies who'd had seizures. So I ran behind him and when we got to her she was foaming at the mouth.

I turned her on her side, and then I sat on top of her with all my 240 pounds, so that she couldn't move. Within twenty minutes the seizure was over. I helped her to a couch and talked to her, and when she spoke back, I knew she was okay.

My buddies and I chatted with everyone, trying to take inventory of all the residents. "Lillian, where do you think your boys went?" I asked an old woman.

"Last time I seen them they was going to the Superdome," she replied. Like so many others, she'd had no contact with her sons and was fretting.

Another neighbor kept asking, "Where my grandbaby at?"

By now my buddies and I had grown to a group of two dozen or so, most of us in our thirties. All the way down the balcony, people gathered in clusters, talking, just like it was a family day, like a reunion, which helped keep their minds off all the worry.

Later on, I sat thinking about a lot of things, like whether I was going to make it and why I'd talked my friends into staying, just because I didn't want to leave my city. If I heard the weatherman say something like that now, I wouldn't wait around to find out what was going to happen. I'd be in the next state.

My guilt helped motivate me to step forward and do whatever it took to help others survive.

At last, under a sky the color of tar, I slept on one of the sofas we had dragged out to the balcony. The sky remained nearly black and by morning, rain was coming down so hard, it sounded like ice falling.

(to be continued)

## Service Spotlight: PhilanthroFEST

By Johnathan Comer  
Volunteer

PhilanthroFEST brings together men and women of all ages to support those in need in and around Washington DC. Join 300+ volunteers to collect and distribute donations, serve meals to the homeless, and get involved with a good cause. OneUmbrella Foundation is happy to provide aid not only to individuals, but to



local non-profits, as well. Organizations will be present to sign up volunteers and share their causes with guests and volunteers alike. Want to get involved? Let us know!

PhilanthroFEST will be distributing meals, clothing and shoes to the local homeless population on March 15, 2014 in Franklin Square Park (I and 14 Streets NW) - Washington, D.C. - 12P.M. to 4P.M.

*Right: PhilanthroFEST is organized by the OneUmbrella Foundation.*

**Academy of Hope:** 269-6623  
601 Edgewood St, NE  
[aohdc.org](http://aohdc.org)



**Bread for the City:**  
265-2400 (NW) | 561-8587 (SE)  
1525 7th St, NW | 1640 Good Hope Rd, SE  
[breadforthecity.org](http://breadforthecity.org)



**Calvary Women's Services:** 678-2341  
1217 Good Hope Road, SE  
[calvaryservices.org](http://calvaryservices.org)



**Catholic Charities:** 772-4300  
[catholiccharitiesdc.org/gethelp](http://catholiccharitiesdc.org/gethelp)



**Charlie's Place:** 232-3066  
1830 Connecticut Ave, NW  
[charliesplacedc.org](http://charliesplacedc.org)



**Christ House:** 328-1100  
1717 Columbia Rd, NW  
[christhouse.org](http://christhouse.org)



**Church of the Pilgrims:** 387-6612  
2201 P St, NW  
[churchofthepilgrims.org/outreach](http://churchofthepilgrims.org/outreach)  
food (1 - 1:30 on Sundays only)



**Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place:** 364-1419  
4713 Wisconsin Ave, NW  
[cchfp.org](http://cchfp.org)



**Community Family Life Services:**  
347-0511  
305 E St, NW  
[cflsdc.org](http://cflsdc.org)



**Community of Hope:** 232-7356  
[communityofhopedc.org](http://communityofhopedc.org)



**Covenant House Washington:**  
610-9600  
2001 Mississippi Avenue, SE  
[covenanthousedc.org](http://covenanthousedc.org)



**D.C. Coalition for the Homeless:**  
347-8870  
1234 Massachusetts Ave, NW  
[dccfh.org](http://dccfh.org)



**Father McKenna Center:** 842-1112  
19 Eye St, NW  
[fathermckennacenter.org](http://fathermckennacenter.org)



**Food and Friends:** 269-2277  
219 Riggs Rd, NE  
[foodandfriends.org](http://foodandfriends.org)  
(home delivery for those suffering from HIV, cancer, etc)



**Foundry Methodist Church:** 332-4010  
1500 16th St, NW  
[foundrymc.org/ministry-opportunities](http://foundrymc.org/ministry-opportunities)  
ID (FRIDAY 9-12 ONLY)



**Georgetown Ministry Center:**  
338-8301  
1041 Wisconsin Ave, NW  
[georgetownministrycenter.org](http://georgetownministrycenter.org)



**Gospel Rescue Ministries:** 842-1731  
810 5th St, NW  
[grm.org](http://grm.org)



**Jobs Have Priority:** 544-9128  
425 Snd St, NW  
[jobshavepriority.org](http://jobshavepriority.org)



**John Young Center:** 639-8569  
119 D Street, NW



**Martha's Table:** 328-6608  
2114 14th St, NW  
[marthastable.org](http://marthastable.org)



**Miriam's Kitchen:** 452-8926  
2401 Virginia Ave, NW  
[miriamskitchen.org](http://miriamskitchen.org)



**My Sister's Place:**  
529-5991 (24-hour hotline)  
[mysistersplacedc.org](http://mysistersplacedc.org)



**N Street Village:** 939-2060  
1333 N Street, NW  
[nstreetvillage.org](http://nstreetvillage.org)



**New York Ave Shelter:** 832-2359  
1355-57 New York Ave, NE



**Open Door Shelter:** 639-8093  
425 2nd St, NW  
[newhopeministriesdc.org/id3.html](http://newhopeministriesdc.org/id3.html)



**Rachel's Women's Center:**  
682-1005  
1222 11th St, NW  
[rachaels.org](http://rachaels.org)



**Samaritan Inns:** 667-8831  
2523 14th St, NW  
[samaritaninns.org](http://samaritaninns.org)



**Samaritan Ministries:**  
1516 Hamilton Street NW | 722-2280  
1345 U Street SE | 889-7702  
[samaritanministry.org](http://samaritanministry.org)



**Sasha Bruce Youthwork:** 675-9340  
741 8th St, SE  
[sashabruce.org](http://sashabruce.org)



**So Others Might Eat (SOME)**  
797-8806  
71 O St, NW  
[some.org](http://some.org)



STREET SENSE  
March 12 - 25, 2014

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15

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1-888-7WE HELP (1-888-793-4357)

**SHELTER HOTLINE:**  
**1-800-535-7252**

**St. Luke's Mission Center:** 333-4949  
3655 Calvert St. NW  
[stlukesmissioncenter.org](http://stlukesmissioncenter.org)



**Thrive DC:** 737-9311  
1525 Newton St, NW  
[thrivedc.org](http://thrivedc.org)



**Unity Health Care:** 745-4300  
3020 14th St, NW  
[unityhealthcare.org](http://unityhealthcare.org)



**The Welcome Table:** 347-2635  
1317 G St, NW  
[epiphanydc.org/thewelcometable](http://epiphanydc.org/thewelcometable)



**Whitman-Walker Health**  
1701 14th St, NW | 745-7000  
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[whitman-walker.org](http://whitman-walker.org)



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## VENDOR PROFILE: JAMES DANIEL JOHNSON

By Sam Bermas-Dawes  
Editorial Intern



James Daniel Johnson, known by his friends as “J.J.” or Daniel, aspires to be a successful poet. He began writing poetry in prison, while serving time in 1997. Since then, Johnson has completed several collections of poetry and continues to write.

He plans to publish his newest collection, “Internal Reflections-It Is What It Is,” on Kindle, and also in a print edition.

One of the poems included in Johnson’s upcoming collection, *A Lot Worse*, (see page 9) gives a sense of the personal struggles the author has experienced, and provides a brief summary of the where Johnson has been, and where he plans on going.

“I’ve suffered from failure and self destruction, I’m familiar with /Hard times

/I now reflect on my adversities in the form of poetry that rhymes.”

Johnson says there is a poem in his collection for everybody. He writes about religion, love, overcoming adversity, drug addiction, homelessness, and his time in prison.

“My poetry for me is a way to vent and express what I’m feeling,” he says. Johnson relates his material to what others are feeling too, and he thinks that what makes his poetry powerful.

Born in Florence, South Carolina, Johnson came to the District to pursue his writing career. Five collections of poetry later, with a sixth on its way James is grateful for the many people he has met in the city who have supported his poetry.

The first piece of poetry Johnson published in Street Sense was entitled “Respect the Dream,” a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It appeared in the February 26 edition

“Working with Street Sense gives me an opportunity to share my poetry with the public, and to get myself some exposure,” said Johnson.

He said he wants to continue contributing his poetry to Street Sense, and occasionally sell papers as a vendor as well.

He likes to work out, jog, listen to music, read his Bible, and put together sermons that he emails to friends.

He wants to work with youth, sharing his story in the hopes of teaching lessons about the value of sobriety and independence.

***My poetry for me is a way to vent and express what I’m feeling.***

Following a rough childhood, self-medication with drugs and alcohol pushed Johnson into a downward spiral.

“Addiction took me for a hell of a ride,” he says. A rough sentence in prison convinced him that he needed to get his life together, if only to avoid getting locked up again.

Despite facing obstacles in the pursuit of his goals, Johnson is resilient and has maintained his sobriety

“I have a lot to be grateful for. Sometime when I want to complain, I say well, I look at the plus. I am free, I am sober, I am healthy, I have potential, I got hope.”

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## Visions

By Larry Garner  
Vendor

Just another lonely night  
without a word being said  
with my mind drifting off  
into space;

With the world at ease and  
the night so dim, I see  
visions of your beautiful face.

With eyes so bright and a smile  
so warm, when there is really  
not a thing I can do;

As I sleep tonight, I’ll hold  
you tight in my visions of  
the beautiful you.

# CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

The David Pike awards were established to recognize journalists that change perceptions about homelessness, highlight issues that contribute to or result from homelessness, and shine light on possible solutions.

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